Gentrification Without the Negative: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Franklinton Neighborhood

An Undergraduate Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation with research distinction in English in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University

by

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April 2019

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I. Analyzing Gentrification Rhetorically

> *We kinda have the opportunity to do what people would call **gentrification**, only **without the negative component of it**—the displacement of an existing population. The existing population is gone already. They went decades ago when the floods came and pretty much wiped out all the housing.*[1]
>
> *—Jim Sweeney, Former Director of the Franklinton Development Association*
> "Gentrification "Without the Negative" in Columbus, Ohio"

> *Let me tell you what fear. We fear that these individuals that are moving in to the neighborhoods that we grew up in—they're trying to push us out . . . when I mean fear, I say it in aggressive way because like, you know, we're willing to fight for our land.*[2]
>
> *—Davi, Franklinton resident*
> "Flooded Again: The Changing Face of Franklinton"

Since the latter half of the twentieth century onward, *gentrification* has been radically transforming urban landscapes. A thoroughly researched yet widely misunderstood phenomenon, gentrification has both exigently invited criticism and, at the same time, beset the disciplines with relatively stagnant contestation ever since Ruth Glass introduced the term in 1964:

> One by one, many of the working-class quarters have been invaded by the middle class—upper and lower . . . Once this process of "gentrification" starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed (Glass 1964, xvii).

Glass's understanding of the gentrification process—a class-based act of invasion that displaces economically vulnerable urban residents and transforms the neighborhood's cultural-aesthetic qualities—has generated debate over every component of her claim. Geographers and planners have battled over the extent and nature of displacement (Palen and London 1984; Freeman and

Braconi 2004; Newman and Wyly 2006). Sociology and critical studies have interrogated what constitutes social character and how it functions (Overell 2009; Susan Pell 2014; Bucerius, Thompson, and Berardi 2017; Donnelly 2018). Marxist critiques (Smith 1979; Hackworth and Smith 2001) have resisted free-market explanations of gentrification's mechanisms (Palen and London 1984; Duany 2001) and in so doing have raised questions of agency. Do we understand "invasion" in the biological sense, like an invasive species colonizing a new ecosystem by virtue of random evolutionary fitness? Or do we follow Neil Smith's arguments that urban (re)invasion connotes agentially driven class conflicts? Across the academy, these gentrification questions have remained far from resolved. But one aspect of the debate stands out to the would-be gentrification rhetorician: rhetorical scholarship has not yet entered into the fray.

So, what might a *rhetorical* approach to gentrification bring to the table that other conversations have left obscured or uncharted? How might a rhetorician crack into the intractable array of arguments such as those orbiting about queries as simple as "Is gentrification a good or bad thing for cities," or "What is the most appropriate *term* to describe gentrification phenomena?" Under a logic of representation, a gentrification criticism might engage its terminological diversity with the hope that proper understanding of and attention to the name of the phenomenon itself might be sufficient to reveal its destructive essence and thereby prompt its dismantling. After all, the linguaphile could stay quite busy in analyzing the contexts and origins of gentrification's more euphemistic cousins—reinvasion, revitalization, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and even *urban colonization* performed by the *urban pioneer*.

Only two decades after the term gentrification entered into academic discourses, Palen and London grappled with its terministic consequences in their 1984 compilation *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization*:

> The existence of such a welter of terms to describe the same phenomenon is not simply meaningless terminological entrepreneurship . . . In fact, one source of the existing theoretical and ideological disagreements about current inner-city neighborhood change may well be that the terms used by different scholars reflect different perceptions of the phenomenon and of its significance (Palen and London 1984, 7).

Guided no doubt by the well-meaning but dangerously apolitical specter of objectivity, Palen and London reduce gentrification—a term loaded with political baggage—to "neighborhood change," ostensibly to describe some fixed phenomenon hiding behind various scholars' terministic screens (Burke 1966).

Such a representationalist interpretation is not necessarily the goal of this thesis, however. The materialist turn in rhetorical theory tasks the would-be rhetorician with attending to the intra-action of material-discursive phenomena (Barad 2007) rather than static criticism of static texts. Through a materialist lens, attention to a grammar of gentrification can bear critical fruit, but not because any of the terms studied more-or-less accurately represent a fixed and fundamental gentrification entity or essence. Rather, a logic of *articulation* (Greene 1998; Deluca 1999; Stormer 2004)—the means by which institutional forces construct temporal, spatially dependent meaning—analyzes gentrification's *performative* enactment in shifting sociopolitical landscapes. As such, constructing a material gentrification grammar (a cartography of discursive relationships) would require transcending the two-dimensional space of a text. My argument, in an attempt to get beyond document-based textual criticism, relies on images, visualizations, and metaphor, but nonetheless fails to move away from a representational framework.

In this thesis, therefore, I not only construct a historical-rhetorical analysis of both gentrification and the Franklinton neighborhood, but also point to how a *materialist* analysis of

gentrification *might be* performed. Drawing upon rhetorical work in the areas of affect (Chaput 2010) and orientation (Ahmed 2007), I speculatively articulate a grammar of gentrification: a cartographical tool with which rhetoricians could navigate the material-discursive landscape of this harmful urban phenomenon. I begin with an overview of materialist rhetorical theory, move to histories of both gentrification and Franklinton, and finally arrive at a tentative material analysis of the design and performance of Franklinton's gentrification. Ultimately, I conclude by asserting that material analyses of gentrification's *articulation*, in demonstrating its variform manifestations and indefinite meanings, could provide the necessary theoretical framework for advancing the historically intractable debates about its nature and effects.

It is my hope that in writing this thesis I can ensure that, if only in the annals of the Ohio State University Knowledge Bank, a counter-hegemonic narrative will capture Franklinton's sociopolitical complexities and contest the dominant discourses that will undoubtedly swallow the memories and stories of "the Bottoms."[1] Although this project did not, as I had at one time hoped it could have done, capture the lived experiences and sentiments of Franklinton's stakeholders and displacees, I would like to express sincere gratitude toward those journalists and bloggers who have done the much-needed work of ensuring that their voices have been heard.[3]

II. Articulation in a New Materialism

Atomic Rhetorics

New Materialism's advocates and adherents have been theorizing the uncertain, indeterminate realms of material-discursivity for the past two decades. What becomes central to the research question within this paradigm is how one engages and understands the dynamic

[1] Franklinton's nickname.

relationships between language, matter, and meaning(s). Just as Heisenberg has done for the quantum physicist in locating an electron within an inconclusive field of probability, New Materialism has presented rhetoricians with the task of locating "points of nodal truth" anchored temporally within ever-shifting fields of material-discursivity (DeLuca 1999). Consequently, tackling gentrification (or any other phenomenon) *rhetorically* involves not only disembarking from a static criticism of documents (and a monomodal notion of text), but also mapping how *mult*imodal texts/acts intra-actively *perform* rhetoric with variform contexts. Zagacki and Gallagher put it more concisely: "The move from symbolicity to materiality involves a shift from examining representations (what does a text mean/what are the persuader's goals) to examining enactments (what does a text or artifact do/what are the consequences beyond that of the persuader's goals)" (Zagacki and Gallagher 2009).

It is precisely within this motion toward an examination of dynamic, textual impacts-in-the-world that new materialists have situated a logic of articulation. Nathan Stormer, whose project of rhetorical diversity calls upon a framework of articulation, offers us a working definition:

> Articulation is a performative concept about the ordering of matter and meaning. To articulate is to produce bodies, language, and the space of their relative disposition through shared acts. Ultimately, practices establish different orders of discourse and things and, thus, condition the relationships that enable diverse modes of rhetoric to function. Historicizing the order articulated by practices becomes a way to trace genealogies of diverse rhetorics (Stormer 2004, 257).

As Zagacki and Gallagher have suggested in highlighting the *enactments* produced by discourse, Stormer's definition hints at the decentralization of *human* agency demanded by an articulative framework.

New Materialism thus grants a far more motive, agential quality than that which has been historically relegated to *rhetoric* itself. Instead of a static instance of discourse bonded to a fixed situation and elocuted by a fixed agent, rhetoric continually emerges from and is infused with intra-active agential constructs (Barad 2007). Deluca elaborates on the practice of articulation, emphasizing the activity, partiality and openness of discourses:

> The practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant over- flowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity (DeLuca 1999, 335).

To visualize this complex rhetorical framework, we can look to Neils Bohr's quantum model of the atom—its ontological consequences having informed Barad's agential realism—to craft a visual metaphor of the "different orders of discourse and things" and "nodal points which partially fix meaning."

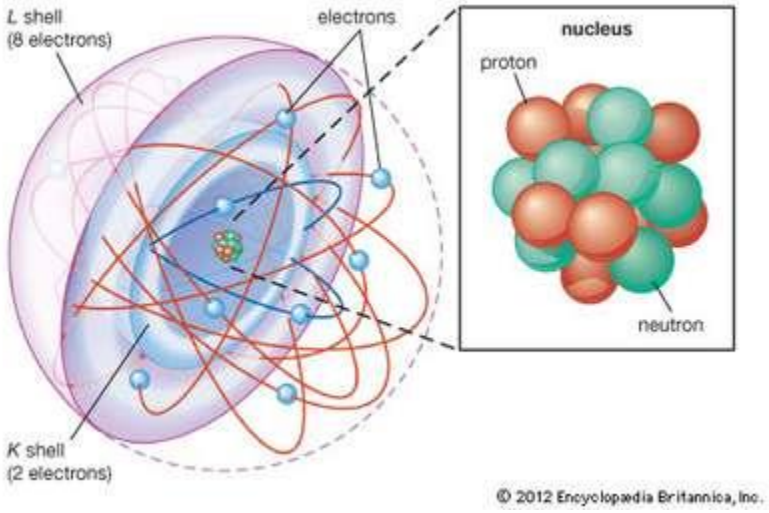

Fig 1. Two-dimensional rendering of electron orbit.[4]

Electrons orbiting a hydrogen atom occupy different energy levels, or orders, and are subject to the energetic influence of what we can for all intents and purposes consider an infinite field of

atomic matter—the (multi)verse. Bohr developed a cartography of electron orbits to describe the actions of atoms (how they emit light, for example)[5], and Greene similarly describes a cartography of articulation:

> . . .the idea of a governing institution allows the critic to *map the effectivity of rhetorical practices* in terms of their contribution to the act of government. That is, a materialist rhetoric marks how governing institutions represent, mobilize, and regulate a population in order to judge their way of life. In this light, rhetoric becomes a technique of government no longer attenuating its materiality to the politics of representation (Greene 1998, 22, emphasis mine).

From the deepest trenches of ontological speculation to small-t theorization of governmental apparatuses at work in society, a logic of articulation directs our attention to an active, mobile, and open-ended rhetoric and its instrumental role in social arrangements. Gentrification, as a both a global and local phenomenon, can demonstrate these institutional articulations at work in a given location and time.

Affect and Orientation

However, a material gentrification framework requires the blueprints of articulation theory to describe, with more grounded specificity, how material rhetorics operate. Essentially, how do governments, economies, and institutions deploy rhetoric to act on society (or, conversely, how does society deploy rhetoric to act on institutions)? How do these institutional rhetorics circulate through the body politic and snowball into *affective* masses of temporal truth? Stormer, again, suggests that "to articulate is to produce bodies, language, and the space of their relative disposition through shared acts" (257). For the sake of visualization, I offer here Stormer's description of articulation mapped onto a billiard table, upon which I will describe *affect* and *orientation* as the mechanical forces and vectors at work in discursive circulations.

If you stroll into the Burkean Parlor on a Friday night, you'll notice a pool table in the corner of the room. A pair of interlocutors, having stepped away from the heavy conversation for a moment, hover over the table engaged in a game of Eight Ball. The Burkean Parlor doesn't advertise itself as a physics laboratory, but these players nonetheless know, if only experientially and implicitly, how orientation and energy work to move the balls across the felt and (ideally) into the pockets. When a player strikes the cue ball, it lunges toward and (ideally) collides with an object ball. The two balls (bodies) exchange energy/momentum (language) and in so doing experience a change in the "space of their relative disposition[s]" (Stormer). The ideal outcome for the player—which sees both the intended object ball sinking into the intended pocket and the cue ball coming to rest in such a position as to afford execution of the next shot—mirrors the ideal outcome(s) for a human body navigating society. Naturally, the "ideal" outcome for a human body in society differs slightly from perspective to perspective, but we might agree that it (should) look *something* like the promise, attainment, and inheritance of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. So, we come to *affect* and *orientation* to explain how bodies go about seeking this ideal outcome, and why some bodies find that task inherently more challenging to do.

Energy moves pool balls across a table; *affect*—a communicative energy—moves bodies through sociopolitical arenas. Catherine Chaput, elaborating on affect's role in neoliberal and capitalist systems, explains that "circulating material values, which form the backbone of capitalist production, are attached to the *affective energies* circulating through communicative exchanges, providing connective tissue and giving motion to the economy's skeletal framework" (Chaput 2010, 14, emphasis mine). Chaput utilizes physical and biological metaphors to emphasize the *motility* of affect and the *mobility* of discourse. Discourse, like the pool balls on

the table, does not and cannot circulate itself—motion requires energy transfer. Chaput sees affective energy as "circulating *through* communicative exchanges," like the players at the pool table see momentum circulating *through* pool balls. How, then, can we understand political phenomena as a function of affect?

I remember quite clearly and viscerally how the affective energy of a sonic boom, originating from scrambled F-16 fighter jets breaking the sound barrier in a race to escort Air Force One on a September afternoon in 2001, circulated through my home and neighborhood. I remember how the images of collapsing buildings circulated an affective energy of vulnerability in my classrooms on September 12th. I remember making buttons stamped with an American flag and vending them as if from a lemonade stand with a neighborhood friend. Affect, in each of these situations, acted through material and semiotic mediums. Sara Ahmed observed that "signs increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more signs circulate, the more affective they become" (Ahmed 2004, 45). Millions of exchanges, from ten-year-old's selling flag buttons to nationally televised memorial services, all unfolding co-currently in the immediate post-9/11 moment, amassed an American public identity suddenly and overwhelmingly supportive of the Bush administration, its martial and nationalistic rhetoric, and its *mobilization* of the American war machine. However, instead of admonishing Americans' abandonment of better reasoning, as if to suggest that post-9/11 actions might have been differed with the right kind of public deliberation, we must consider that "affect, in the form of something as taken for granted as *a gut sense*, *exerts pressure on our decision making* and does not crumble under the deliberative weight of better arguments or more information" (Chaput 2010, 8, emphasis mine).

But, while 9/11 provides furtive grounds for rhetorical speculation, it is not this project's *raison d'etre*. Our central takeaway from affect theory reminds us that although discourse constructs, positions, and orients bodies, it relies on *affect* as the energy currency that enables its performance. As we turn back to the pool game unfolding in the corner of the Burkean Parlor, however, we observe that the players must understand more than momentum (affect) to defeat their opponent.

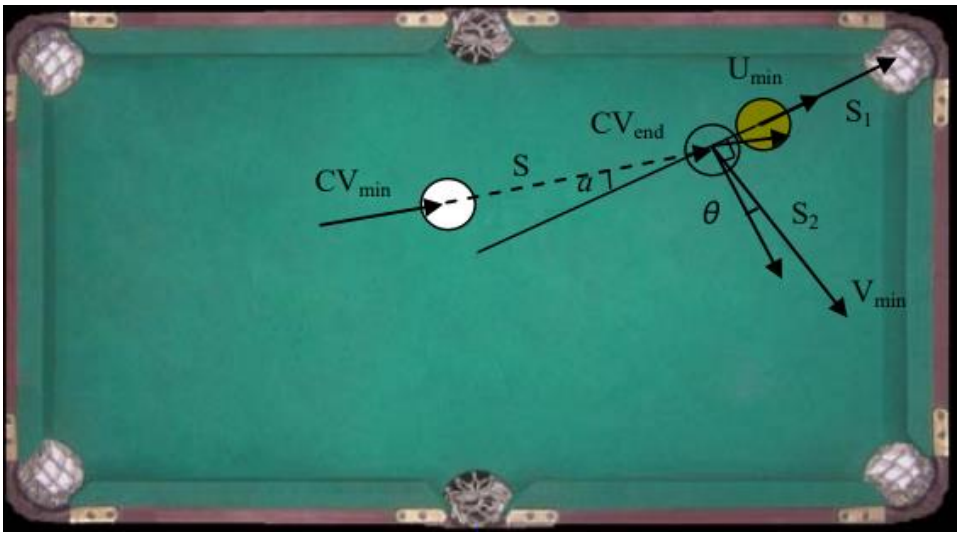

Fig 2. Image of shot planning strategies (Shih 2014).

Orientation, a spatial concept, plays a vital role in assessing—from the very beginning of the game—why players choose which shots they will take and how they will set themselves up for subsequent shots. The image above, taken from physics researcher Chihhsiong Shih's study and development of algorithms for shot planning strategies, demonstrates orientation at work. The yellow object ball's position in relation to the pocket, rails[2], and the cue ball determine several factors for the players to negotiate: at what angle should the cue ball strike the object

[2] Edges of the play surface.

ball, where will the cue ball come to rest after contact, and what kind of "English"[3] can they apply to control the post-contact path of travel? Now, before I drift too far into a dissertation on billiard strategy, I will reign in this metaphor and return to its representative meaning for rhetoric.

Sara Ahmed, in developing "A Phenomenology of Whiteness," discussed the inherited orientations imposed on bodies by a transhistorical, hegemonic dominance of whiteness:

> Such an inheritance can be re-thought in terms of orientations: *we inherit the reachability of some objects*, those that are 'given' to us, or at least made available to us, within the 'what' that is around. I am not suggesting here that 'whiteness' is one such 'reachable object', but that whiteness is an orientation that puts certain things within reach. By objects, we would include not just physical objects, but also styles, capacities, aspirations techniques, habits. Race becomes, in this model, a question of what is within reach, what is available to perceive and to do 'things' with (Ahmed 2007, 154).

Ahmed's attention to the "reachability of some objects" afforded (or denied) by whiteness imagines a pool game scenario very different from the one previously depicted.

Fig 3. Altered version of Shih image.

[3] Direction and amount of spin a player can use to manipulate the cue ball's position.

Here we see how the inherited orientation of bodies clustered at the margins of society denies the possibilities of access and navigation afforded to bodies oriented in the center, which may never have to contact a rail on their way to a pocket. Institutional forces (rails) wall off easy access to any pocket for any of the three marginal bodies, presenting the player with a considerably more challenging shot. Marginalized, metropolitan *neighborhoods*—the neighborhoods most at risk of gentrification—are likewise orientated by institutional pressures:

> What is important to note here is that it is not just bodies that are orientated. Spaces also take shape by being orientated around some bodies, more than others. We can also consider 'institutions' as orientation devices, which take the shape of 'what' resides within them. After all, institutions provide collective or public spaces (Ahmed 2007, 157).

Given this analysis of spatial-bodily inheritance imposed on marginalized communities, the question we ask—through the lens of articulation—inquires as to how we expose the institutional articulation of the urban neighborhood and its eventual colonization.

To conclude this section, I should concede that the rhetorical pool game I have described may seem to operate in a very Newtonian universe according to the laws of mechanical physics, and my discussion of affect and orientation, then, might strike my reader as somewhat deterministic, with the players acting as deistic clockmakers. A Baradian, new materialist worldview demands allowance for the quantum effects at work in shaping a relativistic and emergent reality. Unlike the Bitzerian approach to a fixed and determined rhetorical situation (1968) the new rhetoric envisions Biesecker's approach (1989) to the rhetorical pool game. I can only suggest that the affective energy present in the parlor room, chemically stored in the player's muscle fibers, impeded by the age of the felt or humidity in the air, and circulating through colliding pool balls is a co-constructive and emergent energy. This notion of affective

energy decenters the agential capacity of the players and places them in an intra-active network extending through the Burkean Parlor and out into the world beyond.

However, within a phenomenological framework, gentrification is but one pool game of many awaiting analysis. And just as Newtonian mechanics can quite accurately describe the phenomena occurring in one game at one time, so too can a performative analysis of gentrification's articulation benefit from investigation of the affects and orientations at work in its local design.

III. Histories and Theories of "Gentrification"

Terminological Origins and Debates

Before bringing Franklinton's analysis into this discussion, I will now offer an overview of gentrification as a historical phenomenon. I begin with implications arising from Ruth Glass's introduction of the term, move to Neil Smith's Marxist discussion of devalorization cycles, and conclude with the rise of the "creative class"—the face of gentrification in the new millennium.

Ruth Glass pressed the term "gentrification" into academic service in her 1964 work, *London: Aspects of Change*. Glass, a sociologist, broadly studied socioeconomic changes affecting London. Though not the central focus of her work, the invasion of working-class neighborhoods proved a salient concern emerging from her research:

> While the cores of other large cities in the world, especially of those in the United States, are decaying, and are becoming ghettos of the "under-privileged", London may soon be faced with an *embarrass de richesse* in her central area—and this will prove to be a problem too (Glass 1964, 164).

Urban studies theorist Sam Johnson-Schlee writes of her career, "she lays out a radical image of London, her work far exceeds the single word 'gentrification', but the marginalisation [sic] which she faced in her career meant that a single word has overshadowed a life of work" (Johnson-Schlee 2019, 4). Johnson-Schlee later notes that in spite of its enormous terminological influence, "gentrification" would not be picked up and circulated through academic discourse for some ten to fifteen years after *Aspects of Change*'s publication.

Returning to the contextual prose in which Glass introduced the term "gentrification," I will highlight its grammatical nuances to further expound on her articulation of the concept. Of particular importance are both her three components of gentrification—invasion, displacement, and a change in social character:

> One by one, many of the *working-class quarters have been invaded* by the middle class—upper and lower . . . Once this process of "gentrification" starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the *working-class occupiers are displaced* and the whole *social character of the district is changed* (Glass 1964, xvii).

Debates about gentrification have arisen from the term itself. J. Peter Byrne, a legal scholar and self-identifying gentrifier, put it simply: "the very word 'gentrification' implies distaste" (Byrne 2003, 405). Loretta Lees, an influential scholar in the field of urban geography, argues that certain public discourses accepted and have continued to use "gentrification" because of its ability to "clearly articulate how policy has driven [gentrification] at the expense of the working class" (Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008, 74). Although Glass deployed a more nebulous choice of diction—"change"—to discuss impacts on neighborhoods' social character, her use of *invasion* and *displacement* carry the rhetorical intensity and connotations of class agency (or lack-there-of) that have generated controversy.

The implications borne by invasion and displacement also constitute the battle fields upon which gentrification's realities have been contested across various academic disciplines and epistemologies. Burke's distinction between scientistic and dramatistic screens offers assistance here (1966). Do we understand *invasion* as "the action of invading a country or territory as an enemy," or "the spread of a plant or animal population into an area formerly free of the species concerned?"[4] One definition calls up imagery of battle plans and strategic ingress; the other implies an invisible hand of ecological Darwinism turning the wheels of gentrification machinery. One implies actors acting with clear and defined agency; the other decentralizes the responsibility of institutions and inmovers and paints the process as a natural inevitability.

[4] "invasion, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/98930. Accessed 13 March 2019.

Invasion, however, also implies a certain degree of cohabitation (via occupation). Gentrification's most debated and controversial facet—*displacement*—has drawn significant attention in the public domain and academy both (Palen and London 1984; Freeman and Braconi 2004; Newman and Wyly 2006; Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008; Kearns and Mason 2013). Displacement, at once suggesting "removal of a thing by *substitution of something else in its place*; 'replacement'" and "removal of a thing from its place; *putting out of place*; shifting, dislocation,"[5] engenders controversy because vulnerable populations, infiltrated by middle-class inmovers, are forced from their communities and into an even more vulnerable out-of-place dislocation. Palen and London posited that the "welter of terms" that would themselves displace "gentrification" in both policy and academic discourses—revitalization, redevelopment, and so on—not only suggested various epistemological scholarly alliances but also a desire on behalf of policy makers to shed the negative connotations attached to "gentrification" (1984). Their mid-1980s compilation of extant gentrification scholarship, *Gentrificaton, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* devoted significant attention to the study of and debate over displacement—a debate that would continue for decades to follow.

Lance Freeman and Frank Braconi's 2004 study of displacement in New York City, which controversially concluded gentrification *retards* the rate of displacement in vulnerable neighborhoods, posited that disadvantaged residents ultimately benefit from gentrification's ability to return tax revenue and political influence to their neighborhoods. Freeman and Braconi's "boat to lift all tides" take on gentrification represented a sentiment shared by some scholars (Palen and London 1984; Byrne 2003; Duany 2003; Kearns and Mason 2011) but hotly

[5] "displacement, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/55040. Accessed 13 March 2019.

contested by others (Smith 1979; Powell and Spencer 2003; Newman and Wyly 2006; Stabrowski 2014; Mirabal 2009). A key distinction—research methodologies and epistemic valuations allotted to different scholarly ways of knowing—rests at the heart of many displacement debates. Freeman and Braconi's controversial study sought, above all else, to utilize empirical, quantitative datasets to understand displacement. Critical-leaning scholars, conversely, have stressed the importance of qualitative analysis in truly understanding gentrification's impact on real people. Admitting that his peers had urged him to explore the implications of his study, Freeman himself would later author the qualitatively focused *There Goes the Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up,* which captured the lived experiences of NYC displaces and their insistence that displacement was a very real force in their lives (Freeman 2006).

Economic Contexts

So, *displacement*'s terminological marriage to *gentrification* has above all else shaped the contours of its discussion and contestation for the past half century since Glass introduced the term in 1964. But when did gentrification actually begin? Although some debate whether Glass's coinage and gentrification's phenomenological origin were truly contemporaneous (Johnson-Schlee 2016), the literature generally agrees that the process began in force during the latter half of the twentieth century (Lees 2008; Freeman and Braconi 2004;(Hackworth and Smith 2001). In the United States, scholars have loosely categorized various "waves" of gentrification—although lines demarcating the boundaries of any of these categories quickly blur from one analysis to the next. Neil Smith links gentrification waves to "Kuznet cycles"—cyclical periods of development and stagnation experienced roughly every two-to-three decades in capitalist nations (Smith

1979). Free-market ideologies have accounted for gentrification as an inevitable outcome of cities responding to these periodic cycles of growth and decline:

> Whether induced of spontaneous, once gentrification begins, the chain reaction tends to continue. The difficulty with any attempt to intervene, supposedly on behalf of low-income residents, is that urban gentrification is organic and self-fueling. Its motive force is great urbanism: well-proportioned streets, a good mix of activities in useful types of buildings, a certain architectural quality . . . What spokesmen for the poor call "gentrification" is actually a timeless urban cycle of decay and rebirth as a free society naturally adjusts to its habitat (Duany 2001, 38).

Duany may not have noticed a glaring contradiction emanating from an apparently "organic" but also "induced" gentrification, yet nonetheless assigns gentrification a motility and, in the most Adam Smithian sense, self-fueling agency gently guided by an invisible hand of "great urbanism."

Although Neil Smith likewise discusses *devalorization cycles* as a cyclical mechanism of market economies, his Marxist analysis stoutly rejects Duany's ecological-economical gentrification rationale. His project instead critiques how *class interest* has instrumentally shaped urban neighborhoods:

> In particular, [gentrification] is a process involving a clear conflict of class interests. It is not simply a process involving "inmovers and outmovers," different "urban actors," or collective fits of consumer sovereignty; it is a process involving fundamentally opposed class interests (Smith and LeFaivre 1984, 44).

Rather than a phenomenon delicately pushed along by an invisible hand guiding urban actors and their society, Smith sees gentrification more as an emissions byproduct spewed from the internal combustion engine that is capitalism. But to fully tell the gentrification story and understand the

impact of devalorization cycles on urban neighborhoods' *orientations*, we must follow Smith back to the late nineteenth century and the urbanization of American society.

As the city became the site of an industrial market economy, capital interests required labor forces to be relocated from rural locales to city centers (in a sense, a different form of displacement). Drawn in from without—like air and fuel into a running engine—the working class provided labor energy necessary to turn the gears of early industrial capitalism. The combustion/consumption of fuel produces power in an engine, and

> The performance of labor is what produces wealth in any society, and a capitalist society is no exception. To ensure the continued production of wealth, therefore, requires the continual reproduction of a working class, and this is achieved through a variety of social relationships and institutions (Smith and LeFaivre 1984, 45).

Engines, typically named by their measurement in *displacement*[6] units, rely on a steady intake of fuel (labor performance), which must be housed in such a way as to afford transportation over long distances.

Thus, according to Smith, neighborhoods constitute the site of labor reproduction, much in the same way a fuel tank receives and delivers fuel to an engine:

> Working-class communities tend to be spatially defined according to neighborhoods; the social relationships and state institutions that create a community are more spatially concentrated at the neighborhood level than they are with the more spatially mobile middle class (Smith and LeFaivre 1984, 44).

We can recall the mobility affordances Ahmed attached to orientation; Smith, here, alludes to the (im)mobilities afforded by class and capital interest. The capitalist class's *orientation* has driven gentrification, appropriating working-class neighborhoods for a different task in late capitalism:

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[6] Vehicle manufacturers usually label engines by their imperial or metric units of displacement. Example: Chevrolet 350 or Subaru 2.5.

> In other words, after a long period when their dominant function was to assist in the reproduction of labor power, many neighborhoods are now being used as commodities, the production, consumption, and reproduction of which are a source of profit for certain members of the capitalist class (Smith and LeFaivre 1984, 46).

So, how did working-class neighborhoods' utility for capital interests experience this change over time? Ultimately, Smith introduces the five-stage *devalorization cycle* to account for how a *rent gap* primes a neighborhood for gentrification:

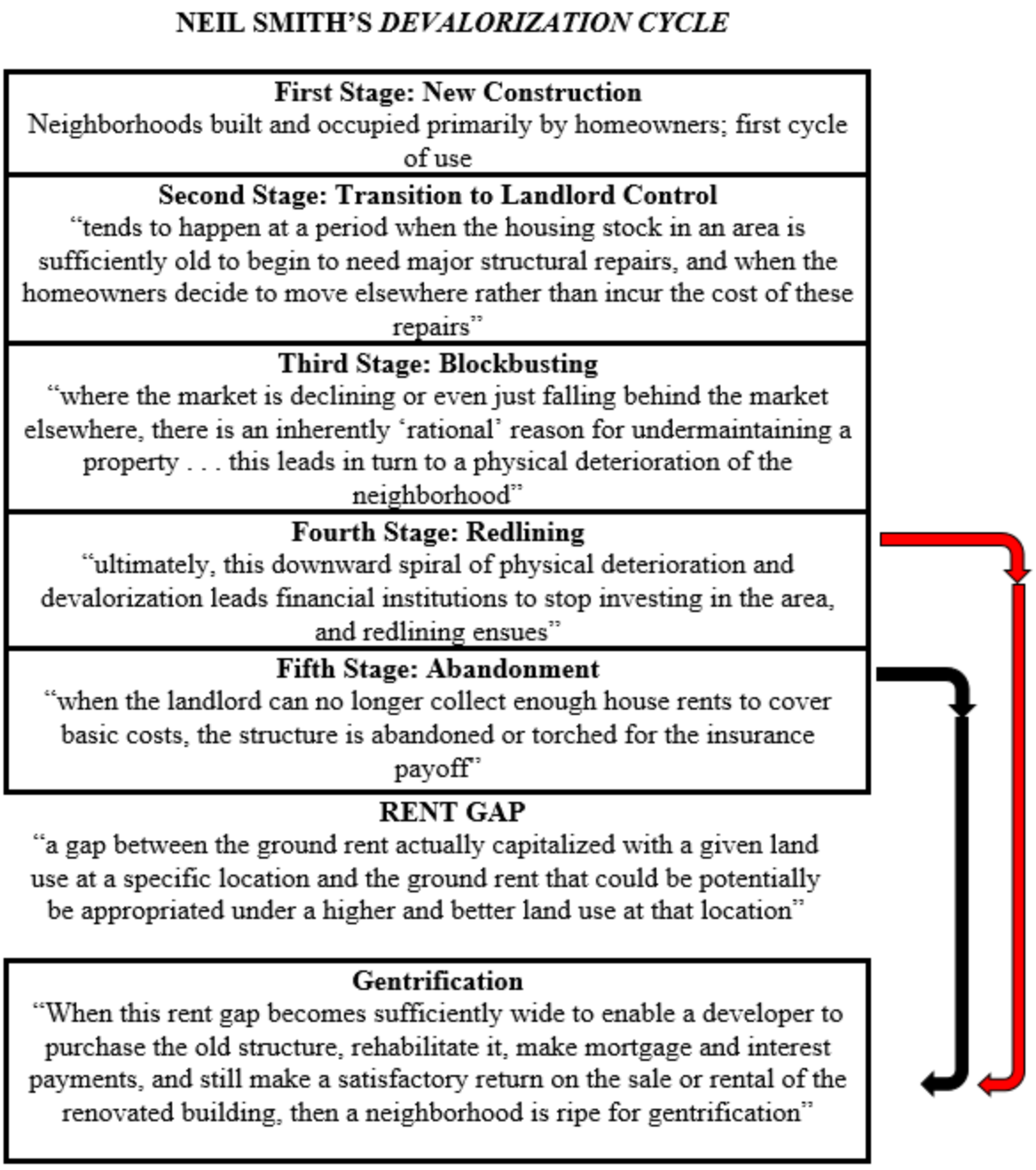


Fig. 4. Graphic depiction of devalorization cycle, chart mine, (Smith and LeFaivre 1984, 46-48).

The central takeaway from Smith's devalorization cycle counters narratives that describe a spontaneous form of gentrification. Rather, neighborhoods are primed over decades, and gentrification thus is a decades-long process. I will demonstrate soon that Franklinton, having suffered disinvestment and deterioration as a result of a perennial and occasionally catastrophic

flooding problem, has clearly exhibited the characteristics of devalorization over the past century. Only after the completion of a flood wall in the early 2000s would the neighborhood begin to open itself to redevelopment pressure—a pressure exerted by gentrification's newest wave: the creative class.

Rise of the Creative Class

Roughly twenty years before the "creative class" was born into urban studies literature, Palen and London referenced ongoing disputes over the characterizing of first-wave gentrifiers as frontrunners of a "back-to-the-city movement" (1984). Socio-psychological arguments about gentrification's motive forces argued that the back-to-the-city actors' shared *values*, above all else, accounted for their invasion of urban centers by certain middle-class cohorts (Allen 1968). The back-to-the-city inmovers apparently brought "a high regard for community participation, shared living experiences, self-help and cooperative efforts, and an ecological ideology that stressed preservation," all of which constituted a reaction to and rejection of the "suburban way of life" (Allen 1968, 34). These inmoving urban actors (afforded an orientated social mobility and spatial agency) *chose* the inner city because it "offered an opportunity to live out an emergent set of values that emphasize[d] social participation and responsibility, a greater degree of acceptance of different ethnic and racial groups and of 'deviant' lifestyles" (Allen 1968, 35). Although proponents of market/capitalist explanations for gentrification dispute the individually agential decision-making role assigned by social value arguments to socially conscious inmovers—instead pointing to much larger institutional and state-level forces (Palen and London 1984; Smith and LeFaivre 1984)—we can take note of the propensity demonstrated by these "woke" middle-class cohorts for leading the gentrification charge.

A later generation of urban-seeking inmovers—the creative class—was theoretically introduced to urban studies literature by theorist Richard Florida in the early 2000s. He had been tracking the values and lifestyle choices of those "creative" segments of the American workforce "who work in a wide variety of industries—from technology to entertainment, journalism to finance, high-end manufacturing to the arts" and "share a common ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference, and merit" (Florida 2002, 13). Florida's central thesis—which has been widely accepted and adopted by urban planning departments over the following two decades (Bereitschaft 2014)—postulates that a city's ability to carve out space for "creatives" would play a vital role in determining its economic fate in the new millennium (Florida 2002). And, not unlike their socially conscious predecessors of decades past, creatives and the creative-cultural districts (CCDs) they inhabit tend to occupy those older, grittier, historical neighborhoods so often at risk of gentrification:

> Places are also valued for authenticity and uniqueness. Authenticity comes from several aspects of a community—historic buildings, established neighborhoods, a unique music scene, or specific cultural attributes. It comes from the mix—from urban grit alongside renovated buildings, from the commingling of young and old, long-time neighborhood characters and yuppies, fashion models and 'bag ladies' (Florida 2002, 13).
>
> Today, vibrant urban neighbourhoods [sic] with a unique historic heritage and distinct personality are commonly regarded as key cultural assets, capable of attracting human and financial capital (Bereitschaft 2014, 160).

So, if city planning departments were to stimulate the kind of development that would deliver the economic yields promised by Florida's theory of creative class interests, they would supposedly benefit from offering up their aging, impoverished neighborhoods to the gentrification altar.

According to the urban studies literature, it would seem as if many US cities have done just that. Over the past two decades, CCDs have taken root in numerous mid-size American

metropolises and brought about significant changes in their demographic makeups (Evans 2009; Grodach, Foster, and Murdoch 2014; Bereitschaft 2014). Bereitschaft included another Columbus neighborhood—the Short North, which has for all intents and purposes completed its gentrification transition—in a comprehensive study of CCDs in the US. His study noted that over the 2000-2010 decade, the neighborhood's median income would rise thirty-eight percent, the gross rent would rise seventy-six percent, and the creative class presence would account for sixty-percent of the neighborhoods' residents (Bereitshaft 2014). The Short North's transformation can be accredited first and foremost to the influx of artists and LGBTQ communities in the 1980s.[6] As Bereitschaft has observed nationwide, "[artists] play a pivotal role in transforming the image of entire city districts from marginal, decrepit, and dangerous to lively, hip and trendy" (2014, 160). The widely praised "success" of the Short North's revitalization prompted the city of Columbus to use it as a blueprint for subsequent neighborhoods' (Italian Village, Victorian Village, Olde Towne East, and, most recently, Franklinton) redevelopments (Department of Development 2012).

Florida suggested that cities catering to creative class interests would eventually attract creative-friendly industries. With Columbus's push to stimulate a creative economy having manifested in neighborhood-level policy decisions over the past twenty years, the city has begun to attract the attention of creative economy employers like Amazon.[7] The tech giant's recent and controversial plans for its "HQ2" or second corporate headquarters initiated a scrambling bidding war across major US cities. With the promise of thousands of jobs and enormous economic benefits, the City of Columbus drafted its plans for an Amazon entry into central Ohio.[8] Like many of the high-tech Silicon Valley firms, Amazon's presence in urban neighborhoods has been correlated with rapid gentrification.[9] It was on these grounds that activists in New York City, the

site ultimately chosen (and controversially abandoned) by Amazon, resisted its entry into their neighborhoods.[10] Columbus had made the list of finalists for Amazon's choice, and of all the tracts upon which the city decided Amazon should break ground, *Franklinton* would have been HQ2's new home should the company have decided on Ohio's state capitol.

IV. History of Franklinton—the Bottoms

Gentrification without the Negative

Cruising around Franklinton with *The Atlantic*'s "American Futures" documentary crew, Jim Sweeney suggests that "We kinda have the opportunity to do what people would call *gentrification,* only *without the negative* component of it—the displacement of an existing population. The existing population is gone already. They went decades ago when the floods came and pretty much wiped out all the housing" (*The Atlantic* 2014). Sweeney—director of the Franklinton Development Association (FDA) when *The Atlantic* released a five-minute documentary titled "Gentrification Without the Negative in Columbus, Ohio"—elaborates in roughly sixty seconds how creative communities take root in a blighted urban neighborhood:

> Vacant houses tend to generally turn into blighted houses and . . . transients move in to them, drug dealers move into them . . . Unfortunately, it's difficult to get people to want to move to the neighborhood because the reputation of the place. And that's where art really comes in, because artists are not afraid to move to marginal neighborhoods—they actually want to because, you know, the values are affordable. The other thing about artists is they'll begin doing things in the neighborhood that will attract other people down here. So, you get a culture like that into your community, especially if you make a culture that can be permanent and stick around then you've really got something to build off of (*The Atlantic* 2014).

The feature spends most of its five-minute run time focused on 400 West Rich Street—a makers and artists co-operative. Echoing the explicitly colonialist sentiments sprinkled throughout the *2011 East Franklinton Creative Community Plan*, one of the interviewee's remarks, "In a sense, we are *settlers* here. We are creating a community that hasn't existed in a while" (*The Atlantic* 2014).

Gentrifying Before it was Cool

Jim Sweeney is not wrong to suggest that floods, poverty, and vacancy have characterized "the Bottoms" for the past century.[11] But the influx of artist cooperatives and breweries over the last decade does not represent the neighborhood's first experience with white colonial settlement. Central Ohio's indigenous peoples lived in and around what is now Columbus, and Franklinton's fertile soil had provided them with agricultural sustenance long before the arrival of white settlers. According to Henry Howe's 1850 *Historical Collections of Ohio*, "the [Franklinton] tract comprised within the limits of the county, was once the residence of the Wyandot Indians. They had a large town on the site of the city of Columbus, and cultivated extensive fields of corn on the *river bottoms* opposite their town (Howe 1850). Although displacement might be too mild a term to describe the fate of the Wyandot, the fledgling American government and British empire both expressed dire interest in the Ohio territory's post-Revolution settlement, and we could venture that the Wyandot were not included in either nation's plans.

Ultimately, the Americans would secure their sovereignty at the close of the Revolutionary War, and westward expansion would soon follow. Lucas Sullivant, Franklinton's founder, led a team of twenty Virginians to survey what was designated as the Refugee Tract—a land grant gifted to former British Canadians who had aided the colonies during the conflict (Knepper 2003).

Fig. 5. Franklinton Mural overlooking OH-315, photo mine.

Fig. 6. Statue of Lucas Sullivant in Franklinton, photo mine.

Sullivant, in exchange for carrying out the dangerous work of surveying the land, was given several thousand acres upon which he would establish the village of Franklinton in 1797—fifteen years before the founding of Columbus itself (Knepper 2003). WOSU's *Columbus Neighborhoods: Downtown & Franklinton*, one part of a historical neighborhood series, portrays Sullivant trading and coexisting peacefully with the Wyandot:

Fig. 7. Actors depicting Sullivant and Wyandot (*Columbus Neighborhoods).*

> **Narrator**: *There were times of violence, as more and more white settlers claimed native land. But there were peaceful times, too.*
> **Interviewee**: *"I sometimes think to that period of time and say, you know, there's a time when we had Native Americans and we had white settlers . . . all living in peace together . . . and gee whiz, that's an admirable time we ought to get back to"* (*Columbus Neighborhoods*).

Howe's history, less temporally removed from Sullivant's exploits, contradictorily remarks that "Mr. Sullivant often encountered great peril from the attacks of Indians while making his surveys" (Howe 1850, 171). WOSU's documentary gives brief mention to the indigenous who farmed Franklinton's fertile soil, but Howe offers more detail about the violence they faced during central Ohio's settlement:

> In the year of 1780, a party of whites followed a band of Indians from the mouth of the Kanawha, overtook them on or near the site of Columbus and gave them battle and defeated them. During the fight, one of the whites saw two squaws secrete themselves in a large hollow tree, and when the action was over they drew them out and carried them captive to Virginia. This tree was alive and standing, on the west bank of the Scioto, as late as 1845 (Howe 1850, 172).

Like many dominant historical narratives of America's colonization, WOSU's documentary forwards a positive affect of peaceful coexistence, ostensibly to cushion the stated goal of promoting interest in and connection to Columbus's local history. Generally speaking, visceral tales of imperial bloodshed might interfere with viewers' desire to "experience what it's like to live as an *urban pioneer* today" (Putnam, Lentz, and WOSU-TV (Television station : Columbus 2012).

The Wyandot had valued the land to be named Franklinton for its soil—an affordance of its geography.

Fig. 8. Aerial photograph of Columbus/Scioto Peninsula ca. 1935.[12]

Fig. 9. Aerial rendering of Scioto Peninsula (2011 Plan, 7).

The river's arc around the peninsula, as well as the relatively low-lying topography of the peninsula itself, rendered the land prone to flooding—a geographical feature well-suited for agriculture but ultimately incapacitating for sustainable development. The geography and recurrent flooding gave birth, as early as the 1830s, to Franklinton's nickname: The Bottoms (Knepper 2003). As the neighborhood languished throughout the twentieth century when its designation as a federal floodplain prompted crippling disinvestment, "The Bottoms" would later take on a symbolic connotation: the neighborhood's position at the bottom of Columbus's socioeconomic ladder.[13] Only over the past two decades would efforts begin in earnest to push for a discursive reversion to "Franklinton"—a rhetorical maneuver associated in local discourse with the impending onset of gentrification following the completion of the Franklinton Floodwall in 2004.[14]

The first stage of Smith's devalorization cycle—new construction—took effect in Franklinton in the later nineteenth century. In the eastern side of the neighborhood, manufacturing and railroad construction drew in working-class laborers who built homes proximate to the factories and warehouses (Gafford et al. 1992). Commensurate with industrial presence in urban centers, the neighborhood's aesthetic quickly took on an undesirable façade in the eyes of city planners across the river. The state capitol annexed Franklinton in the mid-nineteenth century, and a national "beautiful city" movement inspired visions of the Scioto Peninsula's redevelopment as early as 1908 (*Columbus Neighborhoods*; Knepper 2003). Before the modern interstate highway directed traffic into the city, US-40 was the gateway to Columbus. Concerned about the gritty, working-class image presented by Franklinton and the Scioto riverfront, city planners sighted them squarely in the crosshairs of an earlier if unnamed form of gentrification (following images: *Columbus Neighborhoods;* Reece et al. 2014):

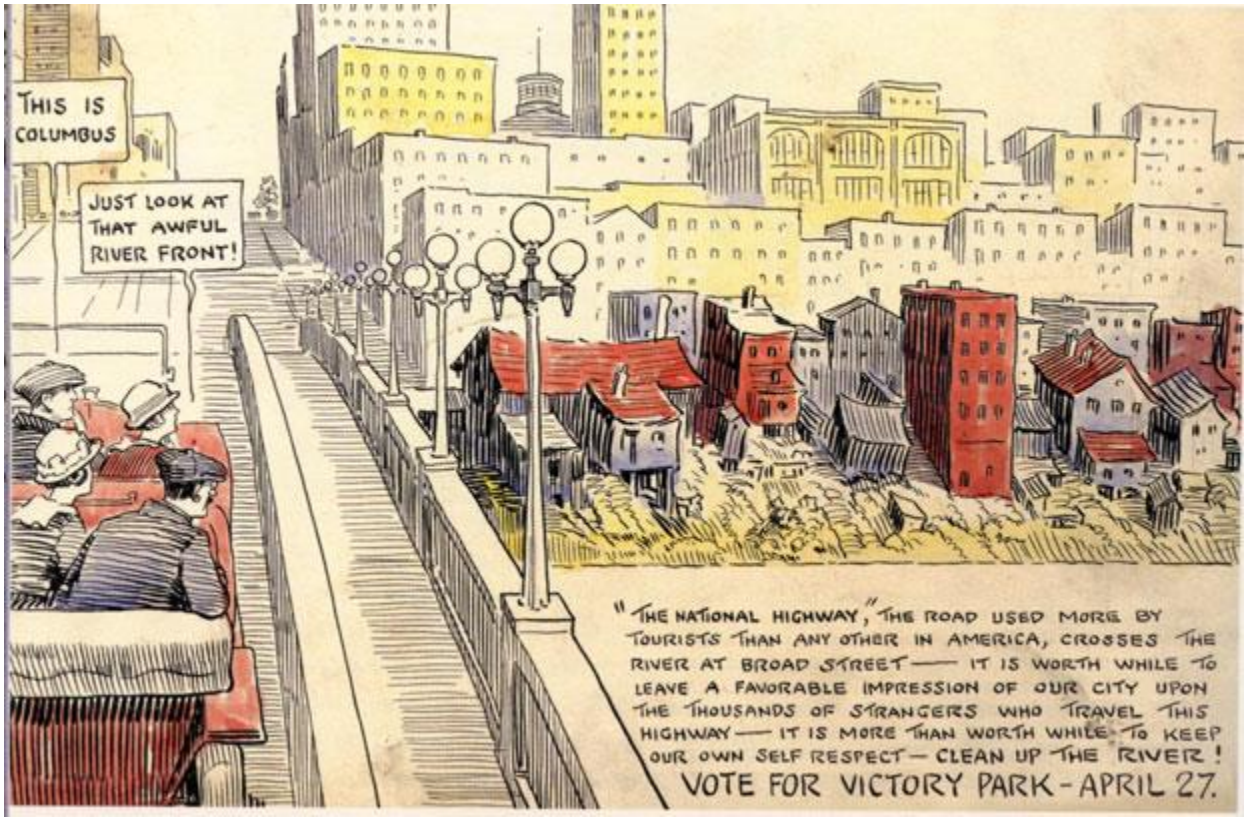


Fig 10. Cartoon promoting riverfront redevelopment (*Columbus Neighborhoods).*

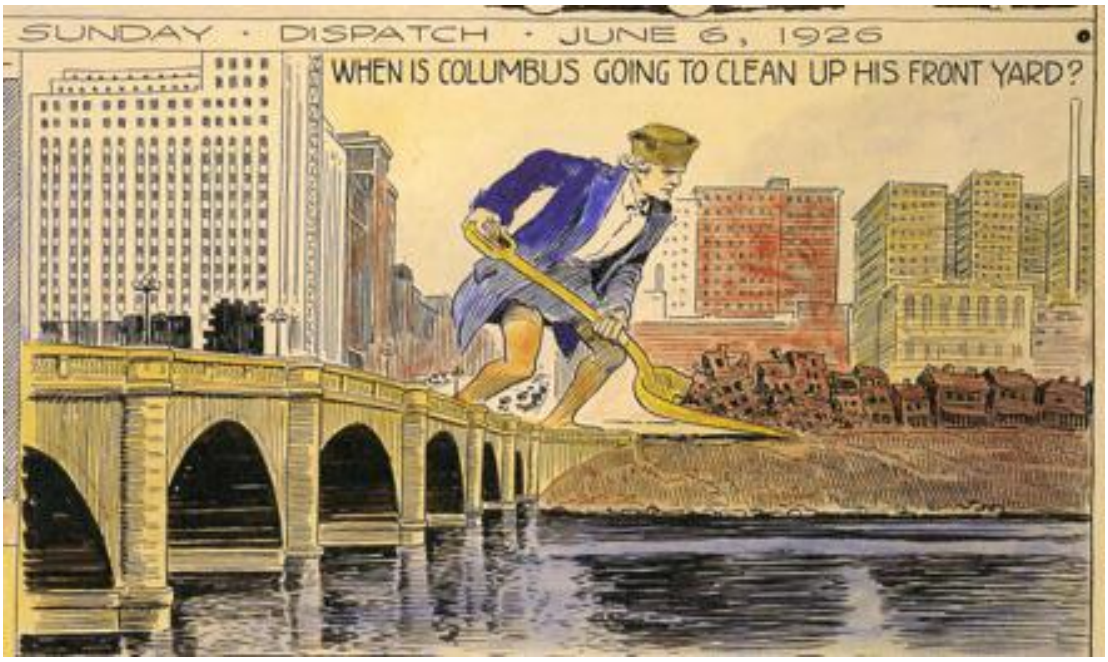


Fig 11. Cartoon promoting riverfront redevelopment (*Columbus Neighborhoods*)

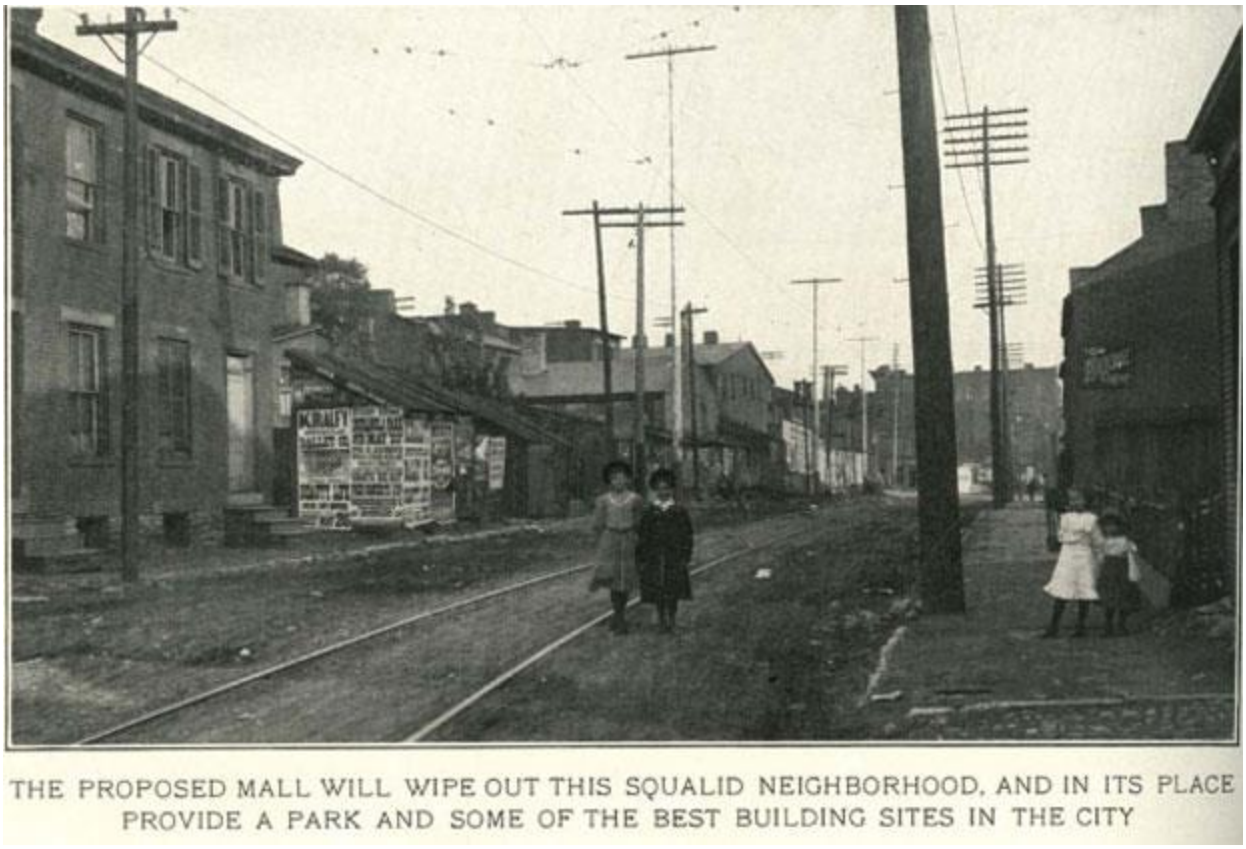


Fig. 12. Advertisement posted in *Columbus Dispatch* (Reece, et. al. 2014).

When the Levee Breaks. . .

However, before 1908 Columbus Plan that "challenged Columbus to become the most beautiful and well-ordered state capitol in the country" could begin to transform the riverfront, the most devastating flood in Franklinton's history (which would initiate the neighborhood's devalorization) came in 1913 (*Columbus Neighborhoods*). After heavy rains had fallen over the Midwest for weeks in early spring, the levees holding back the Scioto River finally broke on the twenty-third day of March. A surge of flood water seventeen-feet high washed away nearly four-thousand homes and resulted in nearly one-hundred deaths (Knepper 2003; Gafford et. al. 1992).

Fig. 13. 1913 Flood damage (*Columbus Neighborhoods).*

The resultant damage to housing stock, up to fifty-percent decline in property values, and the exodus of Franklinton's wealthier landowners shifted the neighborhood toward a state of landlord control and low-income occupancy (Gafford et al. 1992). Many working-class families remained and rebuilt (primarily in the neighborhood's western side), but the neighborhood would continue to deteriorate as more and more capital interest left (*Columbus Neighborhoods*). Under landlord control, and with the federal floodplain designation taking effect in the 1940s, building code restrictions discouraged any new investment, and quickly resulted in financial redlining (Gafford et. al. 1992). Over the next fifty years, the demographic makeup of the neighborhood would begin to change as public housing projects and minority populations disproportionally occupied the eastern side of the Bottoms (Gafford et. al. 1992). The final stage of the devalorization cycle—abandonment—characterized Franklinton in the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first as the neighborhood's housing vacancy rates steadily rose (Noreen et al. 2003; Columbus (Ohio) and Department of Development 2012).

A Flood of Different Waters

The City of Columbus Planning Commission implemented the 1992 *Franklinton Plan* to lay the groundwork for the neighborhood's redevelopment. The plan focused on considerations and effects relevant to the construction of the Franklinton Floodwall—a critical piece of infrastructure required to remove the federal floodplain designation that had levied the restrictive building code requirements and stymied development in the neighborhood. Another plan, 2003's *The Franklinton Plan*, took effect after the floodwall's completion and revised dated recommendations made in the previous document. However, despite hints at gentrification pressures mentioned in both plans, the neighborhood's "revitalization" would stagnate until the late 2000s, delayed in part because of the 2008 housing crisis, as well as the neighborhood's dangerous reputation (Columbus (Ohio) and Department of Development 2012).

At the close of the 2000s, the city, having invested considerably in the floodwall's construction and relying on the long-term economic stimulus promised by the redevelopment of the Scioto Peninsula, took a different approach to the zoning and planning of Franklinton. Goody-Clancy, a Massachusetts-based architectural firm, was hired by the City of Columbus to draft (with assistance from the Columbus Department of Development and the Franklinton Development Association) a new plan for *East* Franklinton (Department of Development 2012).

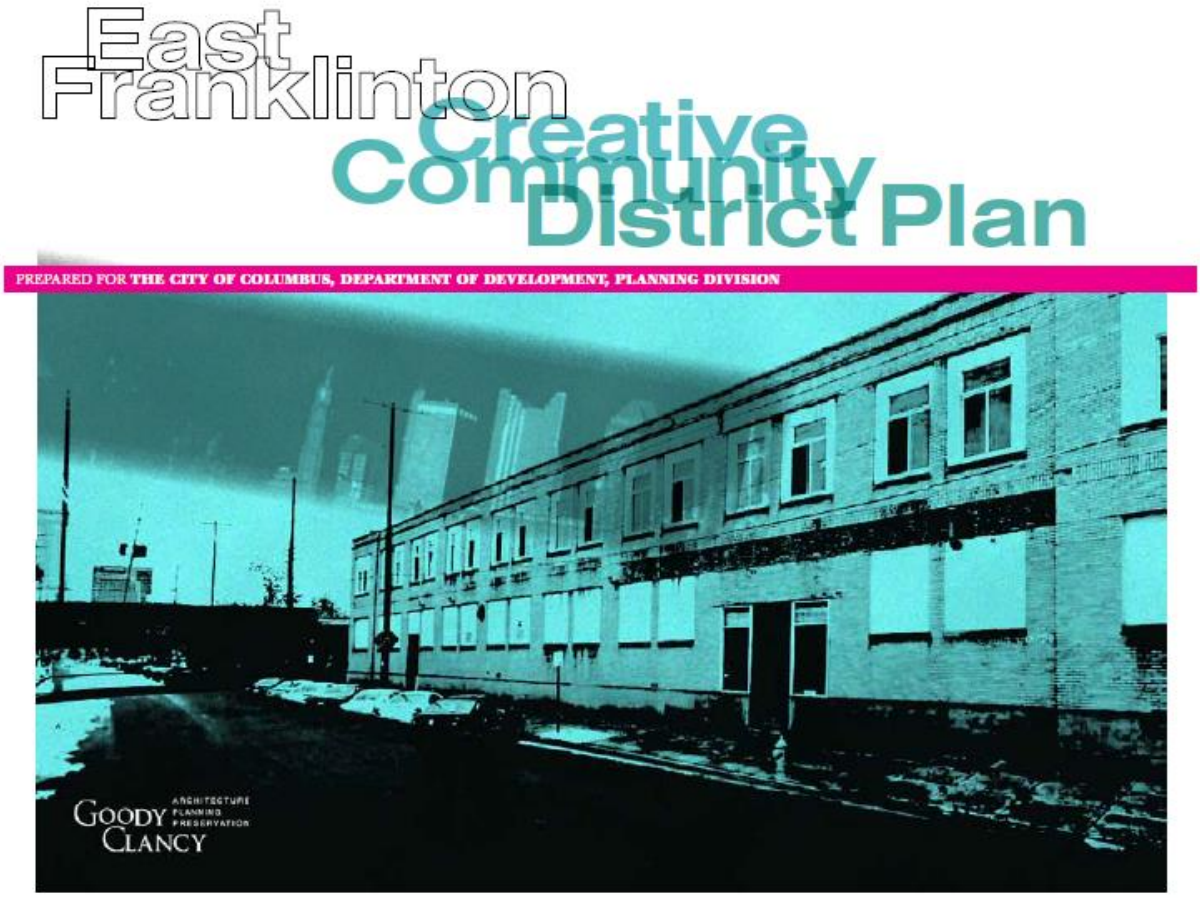


Fig. 14. Cover page of 2011 *East Franklinton* plan (2011 Plan).

It was at this time that, by zoning designation, Franklinton would be split into an eastern and western planning area, with different visions articulated in the 2011 and 2014 plans, respectively. East Franklinton, more proximate to Columbus's downtown, took center stage in the city's redevelopment strategy.

Gentrification has been synonymized with (re)invasion; the invasion of Franklinton, like any military incursion, requires proper strategy. In order to liberate Nazi-controlled Europe, Allied forces needed to establish a beachhead to land troops on the continent. The invasion of Normandy established that beachhead, and the Allied advance took its footing from there onward. The 1992 and 2003 plans that had envisioned a comprehensive revitalization of

Franklinton proper failed to stimulate redevelopment (2011 Plan). Only after zoning designations split the neighborhood into its eastern and western portions did the tide of gentrification ensue in earnest. East Franklinton's location on the Scioto riverfront made it the beachhead to be secured, and it is there where Franklinton's transformation would begin.

400 West Rich Street, the aforementioned artist/maker live-work space featured in "Gentrification Without the Negative," opened its doors in 2011.[15] Adjacent to 400 West Rich and flanking its southern face, a market-rate residential development—River and Rich—is set to open in the summer of 2019. The River and Rich development stands on what once was a Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority property—the Riverside Bradley Housing Project. Riverside Bradley and Sunshine Terrace, a CMHA complex for senior citizens, were both deemed too costly to renovate and were subsequently demolished in 2011 (the same year 400 West Rich opened).[16,17] Although Freeman and Braconi contended that "Public housing, often criticized for anchoring the poor to declining neighborhoods, may also have the advantage of anchoring them to gentrifying neighborhoods" (2003, 51), Riverside Bradley and Sunshine Terrace residents were instead relocated into a CMHA diaspora.[18]

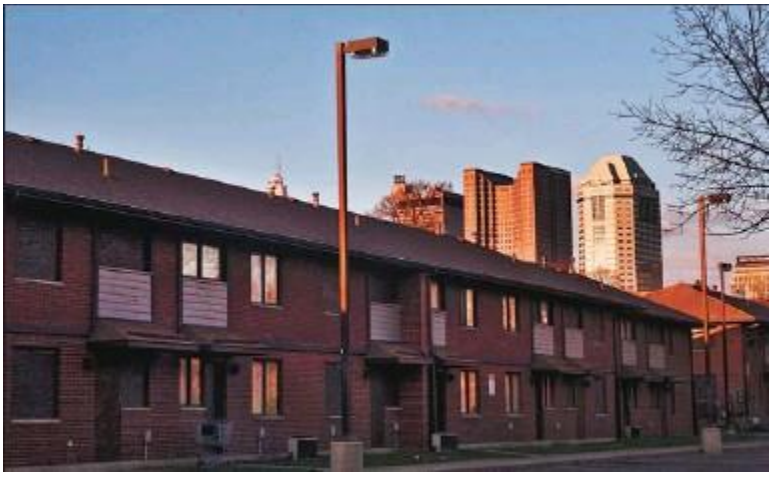


Fig 15. Former CMHA Riverside Bradley Housing Project with view of Columbus skyline.[19]

Fig. 16. Demolition of Sunshine Terrace ("Gazala Projects" n.d.).

Fig. 17. Demolition of Riverside Bradley (2011 Plan, 83).

Originally, CMHA plans called for the construction of a new site to replace Riverside Bradley, but these plans were abandoned in 2013 in favor of the River and Rich complex, which offers a mix of market-rate and "affordable" units.[20,21] Over the 2010s, artist/maker spaces, galleries, breweries, bars, restaurants, and new housing developments have sprung up around the 400 West Rich street anchor, and Jim Sweeney's vision of "gentrification without the negative" has been begun to be realized in East Franklinton.

V. Franklinton: Gentrification Without the Negative

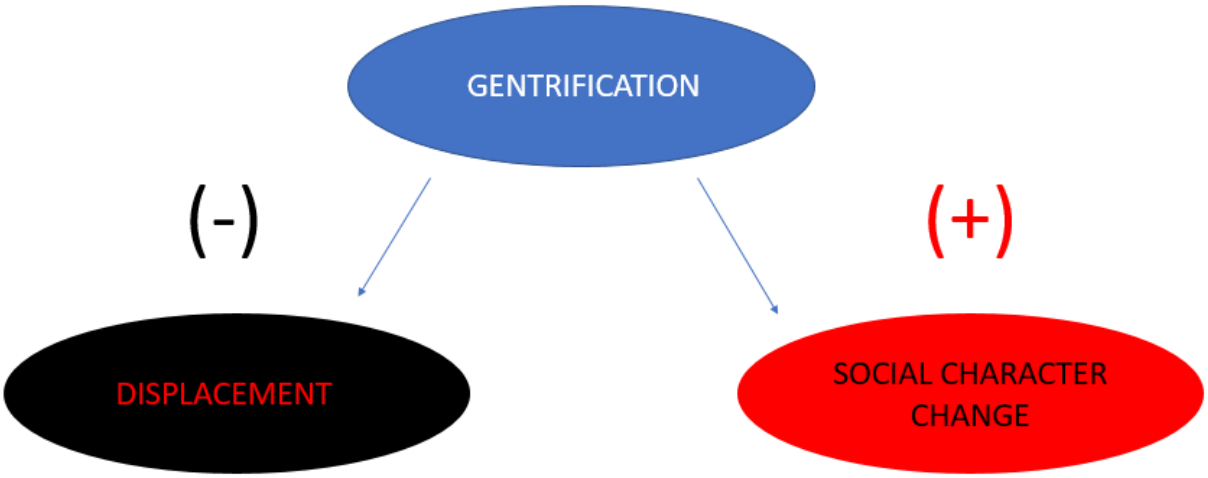


Fig. 18. Graphic representation of Gentrification components, graphic mine.

Thus far, I have developed a gentrification narrative rooted in historical uses of land and space. Between legacies of violent colonization, Smith's model of neighborhood-level devalorization, and changing aesthetic tastes of the middle class, I have situated Franklinton's gentrification as a phenomenon that has developed slowly over centuries. So, when Jim Sweeney says, "we have the chance to do what's known as gentrification, only without the negative component of it, which is displacement of the existing population," the orientating legacies of institutional poverty and racism that primed Franklinton for its contemporary colonization effectively disappear. To "do" gentrification without the negative component, the gentrifier must construct a narrative that incorporates a different orientation-affect complex. After all, if something can be done *without* the negative, there correlatively must be a neutral-to-positive to be done. In Franklinton's case, the neighborhood's gentrification has relied on a positive-affect narrative that I will analyze here: first through a representational lens, and later through a tentative materialist framework.

A key pillar of Sweeney's ideological "without the negative" campaign, *vacancy*, props up his argument that displacement cannot be done to a population who has already left. Referring to the flood of 1913, after which the neighborhood's population and condition would steadily decline, Sweeney states, "The existing population is gone already. They went decades ago when the floods came and pretty much wiped out all the housing" (*The Atlantic* 2014). The 2011 *East Franklinton Creative Community Plan*, which Sweeney and the Franklinton Development Association heavily influenced, carves out significant space to discuss Franklinton's vacancy: "Neglected and vacant properties: Derelict and vacant properties are a deterrent to potential urban residents, as they contribute to the perception that the neighborhood is neglected and/or dangerous" (2011 Plan, 122).

Fig. 19. Screenshot of "Gentrification Without the Negative" documentary (*The Atlantic).*

However, the vacancy narrative runs up against census data laid out in the 2011 plan itself: "Of the nearly 550 housing units within the plan area, less than 10 percent were vacant, a

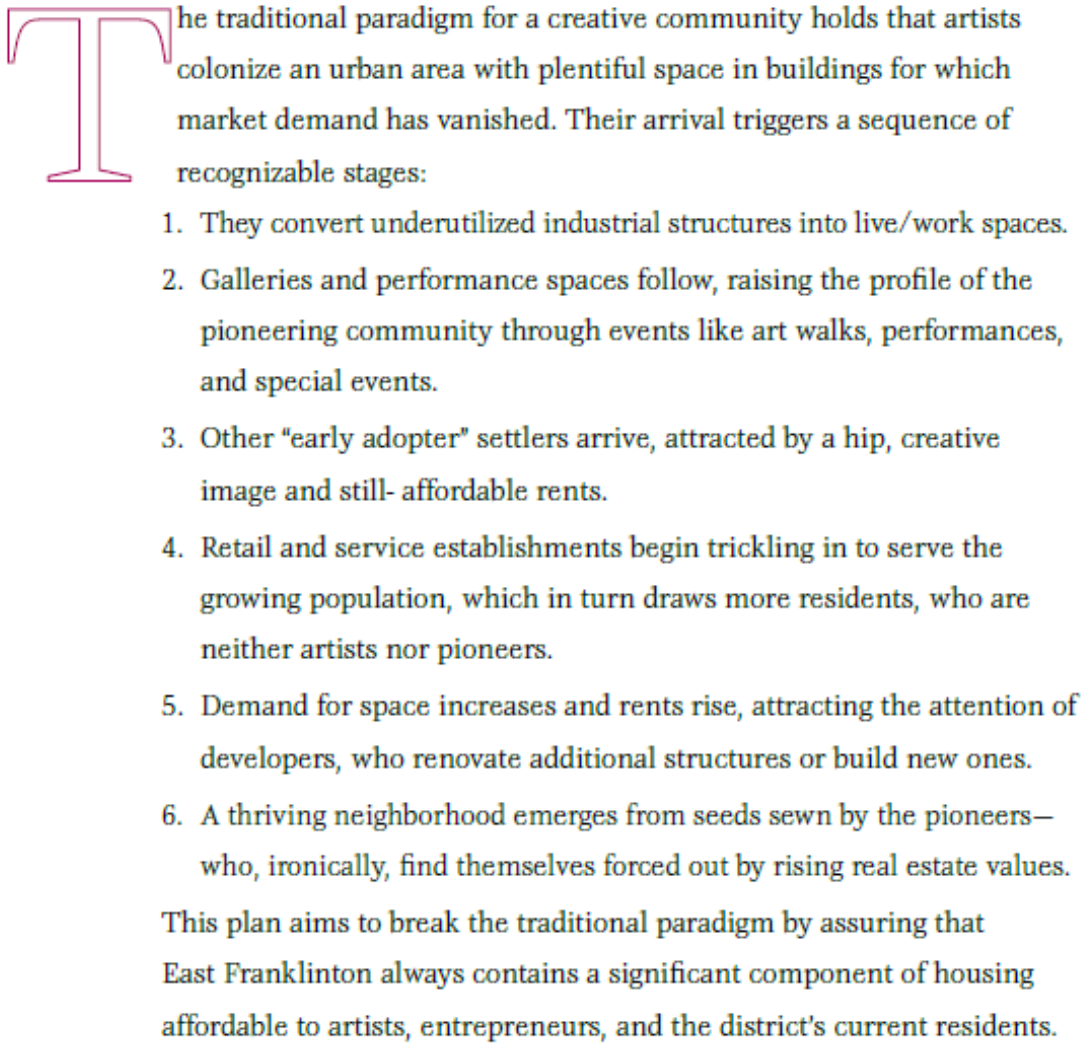
slightly lower percentage than in the city or county" (2011 Plan. 84). The 2014 *West Franklinton Plan* confirms that, as a *whole*, the neighborhood's housing vacancy rate has been historically higher than the city or county average (2014 Plan). So, with census data and Franklinton's plan documents affirming that *East* Franklinton at one time housed thousands of low-income, minority residents, to whom does "they went decades ago" refer?

Historical accounts claim that "they" would be the wealthier, white, land-owning residents who relocated to the Hilltop neighborhood in the aftermath of the flood (*Columbus Neighborhoods*, Knepper 2003). How, then, does the Franklinton Development Association account for the remaining population's very existence in the neighborhood? Much like the romanticized paintings of westward settlement depicting pioneers venturing into a pristine, devoid-of-humans landscape, Franklinton's gentrification likewise employs a dehumanization logic to forward a positive affect.

Fig. 20. *Emigrants Crossing the Plains* by Albert Bierstadt, 1869.[22]

If Sweeney had instead said that the "existing population is gone already . . . they were relocated last year when the bulldozers came and pretty much wiped out all the housing," he would have a harder case to make about performing gentrification without displacement. The 2011 plan's predecessors, the '92 and '03 plans, explicitly listed "displacement of existing populations as a result of the completion of the Franklinton Flood Wall" as issues to be addressed (1992 Plan, 48; 2003 Plan, 35). The 2011 plan does not contain even one instance of the word "displacement," instead referring to the "*relocation* of residents of the Riverside Bradley public housing development" (2011 Plan, 82, emphasis mine). Like America's indigenous, who were "relocated" and dehumanized through violent imperial expansion, the incumbent population of the Bottoms was erased with a "nobody lives here" logic.

The propensity of gentrification discourses to use terms like "urban pioneer" likewise requires colonization to be infused with positive affect. Urban studies theorist Keith Jacobs, arguing for the utility of discourse analysis in public policy research, noted that "in the area of policy work, most of the documents that are published are sanitized; they are written in such a way as to iron out any disagreement or contestation" (Jacobs 2006). What must be said of the sanitized appearance colonial rhetoric, then, with its heavy usage throughout the 2011 *East Franklinton* plan?



The traditional paradigm for a creative community holds that artists colonize an urban area with plentiful space in buildings for which market demand has vanished. Their arrival triggers a sequence of recognizable stages:

1. They convert underutilized industrial structures into live/work spaces.
2. Galleries and performance spaces follow, raising the profile of the pioneering community through events like art walks, performances, and special events.
3. Other "early adopter" settlers arrive, attracted by a hip, creative image and still- affordable rents.
4. Retail and service establishments begin trickling in to serve the growing population, which in turn draws more residents, who are neither artists nor pioneers.
5. Demand for space increases and rents rise, attracting the attention of developers, who renovate additional structures or build new ones.
6. A thriving neighborhood emerges from seeds sewn by the pioneers—who, ironically, find themselves forced out by rising real estate values.

This plan aims to break the traditional paradigm by assuring that East Franklinton always contains a significant component of housing affordable to artists, entrepreneurs, and the district's current residents.

Fig. 21. Creative colonization and displacement (2011 Plan, 103).

The plan's stated goal to "break the traditional paradigm" (ostensibly, gentrification) simultaneously flattens the grossly negative affect of colonization and uses *affordability* as another positive construct to justify it.

As a rhetorical maneuver, affordability plays heavily into the 2011 plan's ethos. A combined eighty-five instances of "affordable" and "affordability" appear throughout the plan. However, within the plan itself, the question of "for whom?" once again arises. Just as the passage above expresses concerns for the displacement of the inmoving colonizers (not the

relocated Riverside Bradley residents), the plan states a policy to make Franklinton "broadly affordable to both existing residents and new pioneers" (2011 Plan, 27). "Existing residents," however, does not include the demographics living in Franklinton prior to the insurgence of artists:

> Residents of the plan area earned relatively low incomes, and most lived below the poverty level. Median income within East Franklinton was only $10,000, less than a quarter of the citywide median ($43,569) and a fifth of the countywide median ($49,041). A full 70 percent of residents lived below the poverty level within the last 12 months (2011 Plan, 84).

Later on, the document makes abundantly clear the fact that the impoverished residents of Franklinton were not included in future visions of the neighborhood: "Targets are intended to provide affordable housing for households earning 60% to 80% of the area median income" (2011 Plan, 52). Affordability affords the plan a positive affect, but once again flattens the reality that the most vulnerable residents will not be able to afford a life in post-gentrification Franklinton.

Towards a Material Analysis

Articulation theory points to temporary, time-and-place fixations of truth and meaning that mobilize actions in the sociopolitical arena. At work on a local level, articulating gentrification in Franklinton means fixing truth onto nodes such as vacancy or affordability. Regardless of the accuracy of these truths, the affective currency they afford serves to ameliorate the inmoving gentrifiers' complicity in displacement, or the "negative" of gentrification. The referents of displacement and affordability are themselves displaced onto the artists and makers who settle into the neighborhood and ignite the fuse of gentrification in the first place. This kind

of performative enactment of gentrification reveals that the phenomenon need not abide by prefixed meanings. Per the rhetorical needs of the neighborhood in question, meaning can be ascribed affectively to suit the gentrifiers' needs.

However, the analysis I have presented thus far amounts to little more than another exercise in representation. Reliance on metaphors or images falls victim to the representational conundrum of showing the thing in terms or depictions extraneous to the thing itself (Barad 2007). How can a still image capture gentrification? How can analysis of plan documents prove anything about affect or orientation? Like the Burkean pool game I metaphorically utilized earlier, my analysis of Franklinton is flat and static—it is insufficient to *fully* capture a dynamic space like Franklinton and a dynamic phenomenon like gentrification. To perform a material analysis, the Newtonian pool game has to account for the new physics of uncertainty and chance. We need to get to a more atomic model of rhetoric that both analyzes and *engages* the material-discursive elements of study.

David Coogan noted in his "Service Learning and Social Change: The Case for Materialist Rhetoric" that "materialist question raises the question of social change by extending the unit of analysis beyond the text" (Coogan 2006, 670). One direction the rhetorical field could to "extend the unit of analysis" may be to validate an "everything is a text" framework. But reducing even nonhuman actors to mere objects of study or texts to be criticized precludes the ability to engage them as agential constructs in their own right. Questions that arise from a material framework that recognizes the rhetorical, affective capacities of nonhumans might ask, "what kind of rhetoric does a flood wall perform," or "how can we map the affect of urban *grit*?" Placed in concert with an *in situ* study (Endres et al. 2016) that engages community stakeholders,

a fully material analysis could collect and assemble a multimodal network of data relationships that together speak to a dynamic gentrification rhetoric.

Sandblasting

The 1992, 2003, and 2011 plans each indicate that preserving Franklinton's *character*, if not characters, has been of utmost importance to its redevelopment. Florida observed that creatives valued the "grit" of urban environments, and a 400 West Rich Street artist interviewed by *The Atlantic* echoed that valuation: "I think artists are less afraid of like 'hood' . . . They also don't need or want nice environments necessarily, I mean, because for me personally I like it when it's more run-down, cause if I mess it up, I don't have to worry about it" (*The Atlantic*). 400 West Rich Street's website suggests that, in regard to the building's renovation, "it was essential for the area to maintain its aesthetic nature and atmospheric feel, to further the development of the community, not to replace it."[23] Grit, then, affords an aesthetic satisfaction to the incoming population.

The rhetorical performance of gritty buildings, then, simultaneously masks the legacies of institutional poverty and disinvestment that deteriorated the neighborhood and also displaces *complicity* in gentrification-induced cultural erasure (Donnelly 2018). Instead of whitewashing Franklinton, new-build gentrification instead uses what I have come to call *sandblasting*:

Fig. 22. Photograph of Brewdog building in Franklinton, photograph mine.

The staircase leading to the upper deck of Brewdog—a taproom that opened approximately six months prior to my photography outing in Franklinton—displays *sandblasting* at work. Instead of painting over an existing surface with a white coating, sandblasting violently abrades away unwanted surface materials like dry, loose, and cracking paint (or undesired human populations) to reveal a homogenous substrate. However, instead of applying new paint to bare metal, the aesthetic quality of grit calls for the bare metal to be left to rust. The rusted staircase, in turn, communicates the pioneering experience of living in a rugged, gritty environment without having to subject the pioneer to the institutional violence of poverty.

VI. Further Research & Conclusions

With more time and a refined methodological approach, continued research on Franklinton's gentrification could tackle the more complicated constructs I sought to develop. The popularity of cartography in rhetorical/communications studies (Greene 1998; Rude 2009) as a rhetorical method could manifest in a grammar of gentrification that interactively engages material spaces, constructs, and actors. I had envisioned a three-dimensional rendering of gentrification's rhetorical relationships and connections, but I could not satisfactorily perform such a rendering without a more extensive and nuanced data set (as well as the digital media skills required to construct such a project). Future research in the area of rhetoric and gentrification could extend the work I have done in gathering a counter-hegemonic narrative about the Franklinton neighborhood by assembling a multi-textual, multi-media, interactive project that more effectively escapes the problem of two-dimensional representationalism.

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